

SAIKKONEN

Väinö Saikkonen remembers, 10th., February, 1976 - R.S.)

I don't remember much when we were on the Sorsa place (lot 3, Con. V, before 1912). One thing I remember though: we had a lot of young chickens. My father had killed the roosters. When my father and mother were away one day, my brother Eino and I took the axe and killed all the pullets. When my father came home he was so mad he took the gun and hit the barrel of it against the floor. Our bed was a mattress on the floor and Eino and I were hiding under it. That is one thing I couldn't forget.

The New Home At Rat Lake

It was a nice place to live here that time. We built a cabin of logs. About twelve feet from the corner of the cabin we put a net into the lake. In one hour the net was full of fish - all kinds of fish - whitefish, perch, sucker, pickerel and sunfish.

And deer! Deer were right around the cabin. You could shoot deer from the door.

There were so many muskrats in Rat Lake. You got eighteen in the traps every morning during trapping season.

Snowshoes. You just buy one pair of snowshoes from the store and you've got a sample. They are quite easy to make. The frame should be a hard wood, elm or oak or maple. You just get a moose, make a cord from the raw hide; by looking at a snowshoe you can see how the webbing should go.

School. When we were real young, we were going to Grassy Lake to school. Then a school was started on Rat Lake at Kalle Makela's. We travelled back and forth to school by boat and on the ice in winter. I remember that one of the teachers was Mr. Doxtater and one was Mrs. Ruth Lougheed. The teachers didn't stay very long, any of them.

Cranberries. We planted cranberries between Kusk Lake and Little Kusk Lake, and all that east side of West Lake. There were about three acres. It was marsh but by midsummer it was dry enough we could plow it. We took the long tops of cranberries and cut them into 2 inch pieces. We put the pieces in the rows and ploughed them under.

I left the farm in 1935. I went to work for Inco Smelter. Four dollars a day - that's all you could get.